ISSUE BRIEF

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MEN AND MASCULINITIES

in Gender Responsive Small Arms Control

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WILPF
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE & FREEDOM

GENSAC
Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control

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Terminology

The following are based on the terminology used in UN MOSAIC 1.20[1] as well as in the GENSAC Action Paper,[2] with additional terms and adjustments added where needed.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes associated with a particular biological sex in a particular sociocultural context.

Gender responsive small arms control means that all policies, programs, or activities at every stage of a small arms control initiative are non-discriminatory regarding sex, equally benefit all people regardless of their gender identities, and aim at correcting gender imbalances and inequalities.

Small arm: any portable lethal weapon designed for individual use that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet, or projectile by the action of an explosive. This includes revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, submachine guns, assault rifles, and light machine guns.

Masculinities: the ways in which men and boys perform and are expected to perform their gender identities as men. While masculinities are mostly performed by men and boys, women and girls as well as nonbinary persons may also perform them.

Intersectionality: An approach which examines how gender intersects with other social identity markers such as race, age, sexual orientation, class, disability, etc. to create particular or multiple forms of vulnerability or oppression.[3]

Intimate Partner Violence: Physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse.

Femicide: direct, lethal, gender-based violence against women and girls, which is either directly linked to misogynist hatred by the perpetrator and/or indirectly linked to broader patriarchal social norms that place women and girls in situations where they are likely to face lethal violence because of their gender.

Domestic violence: emotional, psychological, physical, and/or sexual violent or aggressive behavior within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner.

'Honor' killing: the murder of an individual, mostly a girl or woman, a man or boy, or diverse SOGIESC, and either an outsider or a member of a family, by someone seeking to protect what they see as the dignity and 'honor' of themselves, their family, or community.

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About the Issue Brief Series

GENSAC's Issue Brief Series provides concise and practical analysis of contemporary issues in gender responsive small arms control. The series aims to inspire and support progress across local, national, regional, and international levels of action. It builds on extensive background research as well as the collective insights of GENSAC's membership and the interested policy and practitioner community. The series aims to reach specialists in small arms control with an interest in understanding the relevance of gender responsive approaches, as well as specialists in gender equality, women's empowerment, and conflict and security fields who seek to better understand the contribution of gender responsive small arms control for violence reduction.

About GENSAC

The Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC) is a membership network that aims to make small arms control policy and practice more gender responsive. The Network works to amplify international, regional, national, and local best practices of those who have been doing "small arms control behind the curtain," including representatives from civil society organizations, women's groups, conflict prevention, and development communities. It further aims to foster cross-regional learning through focused sharing of knowledge and experience among regionally diverse groups of women's rights advocates and technical experts on gender and/or small arms control. Learn more: **www.gensac.network**

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In 2020, Pathfinders launched the Movement to Halve Global Violence by 2030, inspired by the international community's mandate to "significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere" by 2030 (SDG16.1). We collaborate with at least one hundred partners to prioritize and enhance concrete and practical solutions that reduce multiple categories of violence and build innovative coalitions to tackle the pressing challenge of violence in its many forms. Learn more: **www.sdg16.plus/peace**

About WILPF

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is a worldwide nongovernmental organization (NGO) with national sections covering every continent, an International Secretariat based in Geneva, and an office in New York City. Since our establishment, we have brought together people from around the world who are united in working for peace.

In 2021, WILPF and the MenEngage Alliance launched a new initiative to shine light on the concept of militarized masculinities and to mobilize men for feminist peace. Through this project, WILPF is working in ten countries around the world to conduct on-the-ground research and actively educate and mobilize men to speak up for women's rights, gender equality, justice, and peace.

Introduction

The link between men, masculinities, and small arms – in particular, guns – is a close, multi-facteted and intimate one.[4] Individual civilian gun ownership is overwhelmingly in male hands,[5] while militaries, police, security guards, guerrillas, gangs and other organizations that use small arms are also male-dominated, especially in roles which require handling small arms.[6] Guns are often linked to notions of "manliness," as well as to activities which are seen as "manly" pursuits such as hunting, warfare, or even violent crime. These notions are embedded in expectations of men to be providers, protectors of their communities, and at times violent agents of change. The close real and symbolic links between masculinities and small arms are reproduced in popular culture and are also reinforced by arms manufacturers, almost always owned and run by men. Their ads show guns in the hands of men in special police and military forces, of rugged individualists, or aristocratic-looking hunters—all masculinities for the gun purchaser to emulate.

The impacts of armed violence are also highly gendered.[7] While men are the primary owners, users, and abusers of small arms, men and boys are also often the main direct victims of small arms violence, especially in countries with high levels of armed violence.[8] However, small arms are also prevalent in different forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including femicide, so-called "honor" killings, and domestic and intimate partner violence (DV/IPV), which disproportionately affect women and girls.[9] In societies with high levels of gun ownership, small arms also play a role in homophobic and transphobic violence.[10] While the links between men, masculinities, and small arms are multiple, the arms control and disarmament fields have often struggled to engage effectively with masculinities.[11] On the other hand, and with some exceptions as discussed further below, work on transforming masculinities has perhaps not engaged directly with armed violence or gun ownership to the fullest possible extent.[12] This paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing debates on these issues by outlining the current state of play, highlighting gaps and challenges, and presenting steps forward.

This paper focuses on civilian small arms owners and users, rather than on men and masculinities in the military, police, or other armed organisations.[13] It also focuses mainly on small arms ownership and use, rather than the "full life cycle" of small arms. The latter would require examining masculinities in the context of small arms production, marketing, storage, management, transfer, and disposal, all of which are under-researched areas beyond the scope of this paper—but in urgent need of further attention.

This paper is based on an extensive review of available literature on the issue of masculinities and small arms, as well as on forty-five conversations with practitioners, activists, researchers, and policy makers from civil society, think tanks, government, and international agencies. The research was conducted from September 2021 to February 2022.

In a brief background section, we first outline some of the policy frameworks with which this paper engages, give key definitions, and a summary of our research methodology. We then examine the links between masculinities and small arms in more detail, followed by a discussion of how gender should be integrated into small arms programming. We then outline some promising approaches to working on masculinities in the context of small arms, and end with recommendations.

Background, Rationale, Policy Framework

The work of integrating gender perspectives into small arms programming has been closely linked to various global, regional, and national policy frameworks.[14] Among the main global frameworks, this work links most closely to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG5 on gender equality and SDG16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. Neither framework, however, explicitly mentions small arms or engages with masculinities, with the exception of a handful of WPS National Action Plans at the national level—and arguably SDG Target 16.4 mainly implicitly refers to small arms.[15] A further international norm which provides an opening for this work is the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which in Article 7(4) mandates States parties to conduct a risk assessment on the possibility that exported arms could be used directly in both perpetrating and facilitating different forms of GBV.[16]

Why Masculinities?

There is a close link globally between men, the ways in which some men express their masculinities, and small arms, in particular guns. This relationship also works in the other direction, with the inanimate, mechanical object that is the gun being imbued with symbolic values linked to "manliness."[17] In order to work effectively on masculinities and small arms, it is first important to not homogenize and assume all men will essentially relate to them in a similar way. Masculinities are multiple, and other factors such as socioeconomic class, age, location, sexual orientation and gender identity, cultural and religious background, etc., will all shape their relationships to small arms. Furthermore, even in places where many men are gun owners and part of a demographic where owning a gun is considered a closely-related or quasi-essential part of being a man, some men may still feel personally ill at ease with owning and handling weapons, and may feel concern about the widespread acceptance of guns around them.[18] The socioeconomic and political context is also a key factor in shaping the bond—or lack thereof—between men and small arms, including the availability and social acceptability of small arms, as well as possible pressure from intimate partners, family members, peers, or community members to take up arms or avoid them.

The fact that likely over 90 percent of civilian small arms are in the hands of men and boys is closely linked to social norms and expectations which link men with small arms, and market guns to men.[19] These links are often cultivated from childhood onwards through toys, games, movies, and tales of armed male heroes. The act of a boy receiving his first real gun may also be a marker of transition into manhood.[20] While these differ across societies and time, there are globally prevalent social expectations that directly contribute to the current relationship between men and small arms. One of the primary expectations is that of men as protectors of their family, their community, and their nation. Such expectations are also often closely linked to vague—but often strongly-felt—notions of honor.

Small arms are often a key tool with which men seek to defend themselves and others against real and perceived threats. These feelings of insecurity may be triggered by direct attacks from others, or by more vague fears of crime and societal collapse, sometimes artificially manufactured by the gun industry itself, often with racial undertones.[21] The role of being a protector of the community may come out of an actual demand by family or community members for men to be a part of self-defence or vigilante groups, or men taking it upon themselves to take matters into their own hands, driven by notions of "good guys with guns" protecting the community against unwanted and dangerous others.[22] The protector and defender role can problematically extend to men taking it upon themselves to "defend" their own honor or that of their community and family by resorting to armed violence, including using violence against family and community members who they feel have transgressed gender norms. This can, for example, include men taking on vigilante-type roles of "cleansing" the community of unwanted others through armed violence. This has been the case with death squads and paramilitary groups in Latin America, Northern Ireland, and Southeast Asia, targeting homeless persons, substance users, commercial sex workers, petty criminals, or members of the LGBTIQ+ community, but also community leaders and political or environmental activists, in particular politically and socially active women.[23]

A further common role that men and boys are expected to and/or expect themselves to live up to is that of the economically successful provider. In contexts where young men face high access barriers to income and status, this may involve the use of small arms as tools for making

Gender and Firearms Advertising

As with all other marketing and advertising, ads for firearms seek to create positive connotations between the object being sold—in this case, guns and paraphernalia—and a promise of how this object can improve the intended buyer's feeling about themselves. As such, advertisements often sell fantasies to a degree, and seek to appeal to certain demographics. Analysis of these ads can reveal who guns are being marketed to, which gun-related self-images are seen as attractive to potential buyers, and what attributes are projected onto the object being sold.

The authors conducted a non-exhaustive review of different gun manufacturers' websites, e.g., Beretta, Colt, Glock, Ruger, and Tikka, as well as of firearms aficionado magazines such as *Guns & Ammo* and *Recoil*. While online websites seem to be seeking to broaden the appeal of their products to other demographics by also showing some non-White or non-martial looking men, as well as occasional women, ads in US gun magazines almost exclusively show White, young or middle-aged, able-bodied, physically fit men.

What also emerged was an over-representation of what could be termed "elite" male gun users in the visual material: muscular men dressed in tactical gear emulating military and police special forces, snipers, top athletes (e.g., marksmen or biathletes), rugged outdoorsmen, or aristocratic-looking hunters. These images are not representative of most of the actual men who own or use guns, but rather idealized types of masculinity, tinged with an aura of exclusiveness. The prospective buyer, it is implied, can become one of them by purchasing a gun. The words used to describe the products also evoke masculine-coded associations of tough, rational manliness, as guns are praised for their "ruggedness," "reliability," "precision," for being "battle-tested," "individualistic," and "elite." While these terms are used to refer to the guns, they also reflect notions associated with the ideal types of men depicted as gun users in the ads.

a living and gaining elevated social status, for example as a member or leader of a gang, a successful cattle raider, or by being in an armed group. This social status may be reinforced by an assumption that armed men are sought-after sexual partners by some women in the community.[24] In Latin America, for example, poverty is too often criminalized[25] and social mobility is largely foreclosed to the already marginalized. This affects young men and their access to social adulthood in particular: socioeconomic exclusion has an emasculating effect on men and boys, and works as a powerful driver into armed violence, crime, and sociocultural practices that recur to weapons and violence for reasserting their masculinity.[26] "Young [socioeconomically marginalized] men are particularly at risk of falling into vicious cycles, as overcrowded prisons with appalling conditions and rampant corruption become incubators of violence and recruitment into organized crime."[27]

Small arms can also be a key tool for men who choose to embark on projects of radical, violent change as a result of male expectations about social and political agency. On a more mundane level, firearms are also a part of a rite of passage in many communities: boys join shooting clubs and hunting societies, go to the shooting range for the first time, partake in cattle-raiding, or use a gun in the context of gangs or paramilitary groups. These rites of passage may also be the entry point into male-dominated or exclusively male activities and homosocial bonding spaces.

Masculinities and violence

Unsurprisingly, given the overwhelming margin by which they constitute the majority of small arms users and owners, men are far more likely than women to use these to injure, maim, and kill others, which after all is what the instruments are designed to do. In countries with high rates of armed violence, it is other men who are most likely to be injured or killed, be it by other civilians or by security forces. However, in countries with low crime rates, women are disproportionately affected, and in countries with the highest rates of femicide, more than half of these killings are perpetrated with small arms.[28]

Most perpetrators of femicide—so-called "honor killings" of women and persons of diverse SOGIESC, as well as in cases of DV and IPV involving firearms—are men. They are frequently known to the victim; often their current or former intimate partners, family members, or friends. The presence of a gun greatly increases the risk of death or serious injury in the domestic context.[29] Femicide and DV/IPV are in part closely linked to both men's sense of being entitled to control women, and a channelling of frustrations into violence. An extreme form of such violent masculine frustrations are so-called "incels," or "involuntarily celibates," who are part of a virulently misogynist and male supremacist subculture that exists largely online but has also committed individual and mass acts of violence, mostly shootings.[30] Firearms are thus used by men to reinforce patriarchal norms in both private and public settings. However, while men are more likely to harm others with small arms, they are also more likely to be victims of gun-related accidents or turn guns on themselves to commit suicide.[31]

Gender and disability

Militarized masculinities and related gun violence are also a long-term public health issue.[32] A 2012 study estimated that at least two million people globally were living with non conflict-related gun injuries sustained over the course of the previous decade, in addition to many more who are affected by emotional and psychological trauma.[33] Gender also plays a role in shaping the lives of survivors of armed violence. Men are for example often socialised in ways that make them less likely to seek care; often face gendered stigma associated with having become a victim; or struggle with the difficulties of achieving dominant gendered expectations placed on men (e.g., as physical strength, being an economic provider, sexual virility, or agency) due to their injuries or trauma. For women, injuries and trauma caused by armed violence can negatively affect gendered expectations of undertaking caregiver roles, or perceived marriageability.[34] In many societies, caring for the traumatized, wounded and disabled is overwhelmingly left to women, especially the unpaid work of caring within the family.[35]

Cultural and symbolic anchoring

The links between masculinities and masculine-coded activities involving small arms such as warfare, hunting, or violent crime are echoed and celebrated in folk songs and country and western music as much as in gangsta rap, Islamist *nasheeds*,[36] or Latin American *narcocorridos*;[37] in movies and video games; from children's toy guns to war memorials. These cultural artefacts are meant to appeal to men throughout their lives, and in so doing, construct different kinds of expectations of what "real men" should be like, and the role small arms play in this process. The

firearms industry also uses imagery on websites and other promotional materials which seeks to appeal to various kinds of masculinity, praising their products in masculine-coded terms such as "strength," "reliability," "precision," or "endurance." Often, the men depicted handling the weapons are "elites" in one way or another: instead of everyday security guards, teenage conscripts, rural farmers or street cops, the men depicted are real or imagined SWAT team members, special forces, athletes, or upper-class hunters.

The links between masculinities and the use of weapons are further reinforced by hugely popular "first (and third) person shooter" video games played by millions of young men around the world, which underscore the relationship between gun ownership and men's social standing. Such links are also given visibility through other popular entertainment products such as movies or television shows, which in some countries are directly subsidised by state militaries.[38] Research indicates that the Pentagon, for example, has influenced the content of many major blockbuster movies and television series produced in Hollywood but consumed globally, including many that overtly and covertly link manhood with gun ownership.[39] Similarly, the gun industry invests significant resources in product placement in movies and television shows. The net effect of this is that gun violence in movies and television has increased dramatically over time, especially in movies accessible to teens.[40] There is solid evidence that this exposure to guns in popular entertainment increases viewer aggression through what is known as the "weapon effect," even though there is not necessarily a direct correlation between playing these games and committing acts of violence.[41]

Approaching Masculinities and Small Arms

To understand and address the central role of masculinities in small arms and the gendered impacts of armed violence, a key first step is to use a **contextualised**, **comprehensive, intersectional,** and **relational** gender lens. This means looking at gender roles, norms, and expectations, as well as gendered vulnerabilities not only of women and girls, but also men, boys, and persons of other gender identities; examining how gender intersects with other social identity markers and factors such as age, disability, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, disability, or location; and taking into account how gender norms are co-constructed by people in relation to each other, e.g., how men's expectations of women's behavior (and vice-versa) shape these norms.

With programming aimed at unlinking masculinities and firearms and reducing armed violence, this kind of approach requires:

Understanding the different impacts of small arms on the lives of women, girls, boys, men, and persons of other gender identities, and how gender role expectations are related in particular to men's and boys' relationship with small arms;

Examining how other factors intersect with gender, e.g., to drive gun ownership, such as in Rio de Janeiro, where understandings of insecurity as a contributing factor to men's gun ownership differed greatly between younger, economically more disadvantaged men in the favelas as compared to older and wealthier men in wealthier areas;[42] or of older middle-class white men in the US feeling more physically vulnerable in old age and thus buying guns[43] as opposed to younger, less well-off African American men's sense of insecurity;[44]

Understanding how men's expectations of controlling women's behaviour or "punishing" LGBTIQ+ persons for transgressing gender norms are drivers of femicide, DV/IPV, and trans- and homophobic hate crimes, and the role small arms plays in these; or

Examining how women in communities can help create incentives for men to give up small arms and find alternative ways of providing for security.

Small arms programs are developed and carried out across the world in contexts that differ strongly from each other, including in the ways by which state institutions, civil society organizations, and society writ large address (or fail to address) patriarchal gender relations—and particularly masculinities related to small arms control. Accordingly, every context requires tailoring the gender analysis to the contextually most relevant questions about masculinities, gender-based violence, and their links to small arms. Likewise, access to human and financial resources varies among small arms control programs, which also affects their respective levels of gender responsiveness. At a minimum, all work on small arms should incorporate the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and ideally a full gender analysis should provide the basis for contextualized, culturally sensitive, comprehensive, and effective approaches to small arms work.[45]

Good Practices/Approaches

STRATEGY 1
Raise awareness about gender equality and its importance

STRATEGY 2
Build the evidence base for results

STRATEGY 3
Champion women's representation and leadership

STRATEGY 4
Turn evidence into action at national and local levels

STRATEGY 5
Link gender responsive small arms control to broader violence prevention efforts

STRATEGY 6
Mobilize finance to support more gender responsive arms control

STRATEGY 7
Share international and regional experience and celebrate progress

In line with Strategies 4 and 5 of the **GENSAC Action Paper** aiming to reduce small arms violence in the Decade of Action, our mapping of good practices focused on national and local initiatives that either target masculinities in relation to small arms control or work as part of larger violence reduction programs. It enquired about practices that engage men and boys specifically, as well as about more holistic approaches to addressing gender norms with people of all genders and age groups; and it includes work on masculinities conducted with security sector personnel as well as with civilians, the primary holders of small arms at the global scale.[46]

There are remarkably few good practices that address the much-researched and highly problematic connection between militarized notions of manhood and gender based armed violence directly. Depending on the context, there can be strong resistance against gender responsive small arms control programming, particularly from within the security sector. Gender is often understood as being synonymous with "women's issues" or "women's participation," which some men—be they community members, officials engaged in export licensing, or disarmament diplomats—feel excluded from and silenced by, or feel no need to engage with.[47] Enhancing women's participation in small arms control and basic gender analysis training may be prioritized over approaches that destabilize underlying gender norms and roles, such as militarized masculinities.[48] **However, there are many initiatives that go beyond a strict focus on guns. They deconstruct the link between militarized masculinities and small arms indirectly, constructing alternative masculinity models through broader violence reduction or prevention initiatives, disarmament, and peace building.**

Most of these have been identified in the **Latin American and Caribbean region**. Notably, some of the civil society organizations working on masculinities in Latin America have done so for decades—their work precedes the conceptual linking of masculinity work to the converging agendas of the global arms control regime, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda.[49]

In other regional contexts, masculinities work is now emerging on the agenda of civil society organizations and governments. There is fruitful South-South knowledge exchange about good practices between civil society organizations, for instance in the framework of the global project "**Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace. Confronting Militarized Masculinities**" that currently works with civil society organizations in Cameroon, Colombia, and Afghanistan.[50]

A plethora of nongovernmental and governmental actors are working on masculinities initiatives, and they do so at different geographic scales. Civil society organizations (CSOs) can be globally connected, but they often work with specific communities within one region or city, such as the Bogota-based huerta comunitaria (communitarian garden) project described below.[51] CSOs working on gender and/or development issues, or on masculinities specifically, tend to address armed masculinities as part of a violence prevention or reduction approach without necessarily taking on a small arms control perspective. Other CSOs are engaged in gun control or disarmament and work on masculinities by engaging men and boys as activists and agents for change, without necessarily taking an explicit gender approach. In some countries, like Argentina, Colombia, or Costa Rica, government agencies involved in violence prevention and reduction programming include masculinity work in their programs. While these different actors at different geographic and institutional scales sometimes work hand in hand, they would benefit from closer cooperation and exchange of the rich experiences of their related but often separate initiatives.

Most approaches work toward institutional, cultural, and/or psychological transformations. Given the importance of age as the determinant identity marker besides gender in masculinities approaches, the identified good practices are ordered in terms of the life phases that they target primarily.

Early Childhood

Awareness-raising campaigns address the sociocultural roots of militarization and armed masculinities by acknowledging the importance of **war toys** as a militarizing factor in early childhood socialization, and by reducing their presence in public educational and private spaces. For example, exchanges of war toys for other toys, books, or similar nonviolent, nonmilitarized items have been conducted in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela, simulating real-life **weapons surrender programs**.[52]

School Age

Educational/institutional approaches thematize gender norms and (armed) violence. This includes the link between masculinities, gun possession, and risks related to weapons in the household with school children and youth in educational spaces and activities.

Good practices include declaring **schools as gun-free zones**—e.g., *Escuelas Libres de Armas* and *Al Cole sin Armas* in Costa Rica[53] — and amending **school curricula** with specific modules/manuals on risks related to small arms, nonviolent conflict resolution strategies, and the legal framework. For instance, teachers were guided through the gun-free schools campaign *Al Cole sin Armas* in Costa Rica through a specifically developed pedagogical handbook.[54] Similarly, the publication **Desarmando Mitos** (*Disarming Myths*), developed jointly by different government institutions working on arms control, justice, human rights and education, serves as a pedagogical tool for schools to critically discuss masculinity stereotypes and arms in Argentina.[55]

Conducting specific **workshops with schoolchildren** to question and deconstruct masculinity stereotypes is another good practice used within formal educational spaces. For example, the governmental institution *Agencia Nacional de Materiales Controlados* (ANMaC), which is in charge of weapons licensing in Argentina, delivers "**Masculinidades Armadas**" (Armed masculinities) workshops for secondary school children,[56] and the civil society organization *Acción Colectiva de Objetoras y Objetores de Conciencia* (ACOOC) provides military recruitment prevention/awareness-raising workshops to Colombian high schools.[57]

Youth-focused initiatives

According to Adèle Kirsten, director of Gun-Free South Africa, "Youth is key: the nine- to ten-year-olds are the main target group for recruitment into gangs. So, by engaging them, we dry out the recruitment pool on the long run."[58] Kirsten is not alone in considering youth as their key target group: most of the identified good practices with civilians focus primarily on **youth**. With current and future generations, they seek to address some of the root causes as well as the push and pull factors identified above.

Fun and playful interaction emerge as core elements of youth-centred approaches. As Kirsten explains, "Deconstructing the link between masculinities and guns is a heavy topic, so we need to find engaging ways to work on that. It needs to be interactive and fun. The two key issues we see that young men and women need is that it must be interactive to keep their attention and interest, and their stories and voice must come into the interaction."[59] Civil society and some governmental organizations across the globe have thus found playful ways to engage children and youth of all genders in activities that cast doubt on hegemonic militarized masculinities. Such masculinities link notions of what it means to be a man in their respective societies to violence, gun ownership, and social control. Interactive approaches that put fun at the center appear in a wide spectrum of **educational activities, from leisure (such as arts, sports, gardening, or activist journalism) to formalized school education.**

Such approaches often mobilize **popular culture** specifically to deconstruct myths about weapons as sources of protection or status, seeking to rather construct accessible, "hip" alternative masculinities in ways that are attractive for the target age group. For example, Gun-Free South Africa has engaged youth in contributing to an International Action Network on Small Arms' (IANSA) teen magazine; promotes videos of breakdancing teenage girls wearing "Silencing the Guns" hoodies.[60] Costa Rica has engaged famous rappers to perform campaign **songs** against arms and armed violence;[61] and, in Brazil, Instituto Promundo's **radio Programa H** mobilizes male youth to construct nonviolent masculinities as the "cool"/"hip" masculinities.[62]

Theater is another popular entry point for confronting and deconstructing armed masculinities with youth. For almost a decade, the **Colombian** CSO *Acción Colectiva de Objetoras y Objetores de Conciencia* (ACOOC) has employed different techniques of **ad hoc theater and role plays of real-life scenarios** in their pedagogical collaborations with schools across the country. In a playful and nonjudgmental way, weapons are demystified and delinked from masculinities in ad hoc image theater scenarios called "Bates Locos."[63] Similarly, **UNLIREC** supported the theater play *Historias de fuego (Stories of Fire)*, delivered by youth in the **Trujillo, Peru,** in 2016. The play mobilized urban pop culture to problematize arms-related experiences.[64]

Another entry point are **games**. In ACOOC's *Barómetro (Barometer)* role plays, Colombian youth are confronted with decision-making scenarios in favor of/against the adoption of violent masculinities, including the decision to use guns or reject them. Driving the fun factor up even more, ACOOC is launching **a strategic board game** called "MACHOS LCG." Currently in the testing phase, this game exposes players to dilemmatic decisions that require balancing risks of sanctions related to adopting violent criminal behavior (e.g., arms trafficking and collaboration with illegal armed groups) with risks of reputational costs (e.g., perceived emasculation or loss of prestige according to dominant macho culture). ACOOC's experience shows the importance of context and culture-specificity and of empathetic, nonjudgmental discussions that seek to deconstruct militarized masculinities and to deglorify gun violence.[65]

Other initiatives work through popular **sports**, in particular **soccer**, to teach nonviolent conflict resolution and symbolize reconciliation, peace building, and social reconstruction. *The Futból por el desarme* (Football for disarmament) campaign in Argentina was specifically linked to weapons surrender campaigns,[66] whereas *Fútbol con valores* (Football with values) is a widespread tool in Colombian community peace building, with functions that range from recruitment prevention to enhancing social cohesion among the children of survivors and perpetrators of the armed conflict.[67]

Less playful but interactive in focus are practices that encourage male youth in particular to **take an active responsibility in antimilitaristic activism**. Examples include creating gun-free zones in their homes or neighborhoods, or taking active roles as campaigners in the awareness-raising and advocacy work of the organization.[68]

Links to larger violence reduction and development programs

Other initiatives to transform masculinities do not make direct links to small arms, but rather deconstruct armed masculinities indirectly. These initiatives go beyond the gun by providing access to alternative, nonviolent, and unarmed masculinities in the framework of **larger violence reduction and youth recruitment prevention initiatives.** For example, **i**n **Bogotá**, the masculinity-CSO *Colectivo Hombres y Masculinidades* (CHM) and the youth-collective *Colectivo Sin Fronteras* jointly maintain a communitarian garden. While evincing no specific discussion of small arms or violent masculinities, this garden project is considered an effective prevention initiative because it provides a safe space for young men and women to hang out, relax, and engage in purposeful leisure activities. It also enables alternative masculinities linked to an ethics of care for themselves, others, and the environment.[69] Such initiatives, even on a small scale, link transformations of masculinities and the ways urban spaces are inhabited by people of all genders, directly with larger violence reduction. For example, research in the US shows that restoring bare and vacant land in cities effectively contributes to reducing gun violence, crime, and fear.[70]

Recruitment prevention programs also provide alternative lifestyles and access to economic resources, decreasing motivations for **young men**, in particular, to arm themselves or join gangs or other armed groups. For instance, the **South-Side Youth Success program** in Belize used a combination of mentoring, training, and employment opportunities to prevent gang recruitment among the young male population of the target community, while acknowledging the larger social, economic, and human capital benefits for the community writ large.[71]

Initiatives like the above that work with children and youth are often accompanied by **broader interventions at the family and community levels** that promote **"new"/"alternative masculinities" for larger social and cultural transformations in violence reduction and peace building.**

A good example is the masculinities work of the *Centro de Prevención de la Violencia* (CEPREV), based in Nicaragua. The group focuses on destigmatizing nonviolent masculinities, promoting men's access to and responsibility for care work and parenting.[72] Similar to the "new masculinities" approach of Colombia's reintegration program, the family stands at the core of peace building and violence prevention, followed by communities.[73] The CEPREV has provided **capacity building to mixed gender and age groups in vulnerable communities** in Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and other countries.

A good practice for normalizing alternative, nonhegemonic, nonmilitarized, and nonviolent masculinities is a reliance on the multiplying effect of **training of trainers**: CEPREV reportedly counts on 12.000 persons who have been trained through this methodology. Argentina's ANMaC has likewise included training of trainers to expand the reach of the workshops *Masculinidades armadas* (Armed masculinities) and *Creencias que matan* (Beliefs that kill), which the governmental agency continues to deliver to security staff as well as to civilians of different gender and age groups, including high school children, despite the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.[74]

Former gang members, demobilized members of nonstate armed groups, or military veterans (often, but not exclusively male) have been successfully engaged as social workers, trainers, or campaigners, e.g., by the **Cure Violence Program** in several US and Latin American cities[75] or in the context of the Colombian reintegration program.[76]

In DR Congo, the Living Peace Institute (LPI) and Promundo have established Young Men's Clubs Against Violence (YMCAV) in Kinshasa to reduce urban violence perpetrated by *kulunas* gangs, working with young men in their communities to shift norms around masculinity and violence and build an environment conducive to alternative nonviolent expressions of manhood.[77] LPI has also been working with thousands of ex-combatant men in eastern DR Congo on trauma-healing, nonviolence, and transforming masculinities. As a result, many of these ex-combatants have surrendered their private firearms.[78] Gun Free South Africa has carried out numerous campaigns to tackle gun violence, in particular working with schools to create gun-free zones, radio programs, as well as sports and creative activities aimed at young people. Their approach does not have a specific masculinity focus.[79] Rather than talking about masculinities, the civil society organization considers it more important to engage men and boys in all kinds of work for nonviolence, to "make them do something"—for instance, take part in advocacy projects, in creating gun-free zones, or in distributing posters.[80]

Legislative and policy initiatives

While the above examples have focused mainly on reducing the likelihood of young, mostly socioeconomically less well-off men engaging in armed violence, other approaches have focused more on the legislative and policy side. The most common approach has been to limit the ability of persons with prior DV/IPV convictions to engage in stalking or other abusive behavior, or getting a gun license or purchasing further firearms. These restrictions have been popularized in the US under the term "red flag laws." While these approaches are gender neutral on paper, they mostly affect men, who are disproportionately both owners and buyers of small arms and perpetrators of violence in the home. Such approaches have been implemented in various forms in the following countries, among others: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Kenya, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, the US, and Uruguay.[81] These can be a partial measure for reducing the use of small arms in DV/IPV.[82] While causation can be difficult to establish, research does indicate correlations between laws restricting the purchase of firearms (e.g., background check requirements) and lower rates of intimate partner homicides, and between laws restricting access to firearms (e.g., safer storage requirements) and lower rates of unintentional firearm deaths among children.[83]

A more extensive approach to mainstreaming gender perspectives into small arms control is currently being piloted in several Southeast European countries with the support of UNDP's South-eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) program. In Albania, Montenegro, and Northern Macedonia, SEESAC has worked with national small arms commissions to support the comprehensive mainstreaming of gender perspectives into National Action Plans on small arms control. This has included critical examination of the links between masculinities and small arms, including engaging with men on gender norms, on DV/IPV, and on suicides, based on solid research evidence. Due to COVID-19, these plans have not yet been implemented in practice, but they do offer a promising entry point for this work, as many programs often struggle to engage with institutions. In Portugal, academic research on gender, firearms, and violence convinced the government to integrate addressing domestic gun violence in its Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan.[84]

Conclusions

Although men and masculinities are central to firearms ownership, use, and abuse, as well as to the symbolic notions associated with these weapons, small arms programming has been slow to take on this issue. Similarly, work on promoting more gender equal masculinities has seldom engaged with the issue of small arms. Programs surveyed for the scope of this paper tended to be relatively limited, often focusing on young socioeconomically more marginalized youth, rather than for instance middle-class, middle-aged gun owners, who might own weapons in much larger numbers. Furthermore, much of the work tended to be in "Global South" countries where some civil society groups already work with men predisposed to engaging with this kind of messaging, e.g., South Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Harder to reach populations, including in the Global North, have received less attention—and perhaps have been seen either as less of a problem by donors and program implementers, or as too difficult or dangerous to engage with. Programs have also tended to be relatively limited. Little funding is available for sustained long-term work that would combine small arms programming with fundamental gender norm change, addressing root causes linked to concepts of masculinity, patriarchy, and militarism—but also the feelings of insecurity that drive gun ownership.

What also emerged is a lack of a knowledge base on "what works" in terms of engaging with these issues in different sociocultural contexts. Other knowledge gaps identified include understanding the role of masculinities throughout the whole life cycle of small arms, and better inclusion of LGBTQI+ perspectives. While policy frameworks are in place to work on these issues through the SDGs, the WPS Agenda, or treaties such as the ATT, these do not explicitly engage with addressing masculinities.

Work on these issues needs to be more ambitious and go beyond merely raising awareness, instead addressing root causes and linking masculinities work with larger efforts for violence prevention. While individual-level change from men is needed, this must be supported by efforts to tackle the structural factors that drive insecurity and violence—and those which promote small arms and armed violence as a "solution." Small arms should not only be addressed in isolated small arms control programs and policies; they should always be integrated into civil society and state efforts to transform masculinities toward more gender equality, and incorporated as an integral part of larger violence reduction and peace-building initiatives. Furthermore, greater efforts should be undertaken to decouple masculinities from owning, handling, and using small arms. This would require a fundamental committed shift by both the entertainment industry and arms industry, akin perhaps to the shifts over recent decades away from portraying smoking as desirable. In addition to "pull" factors that draw men and boys to firearms, there is also a need to address larger structural "push" factors that often leave many men and boys feeling like there is little alternative to taking up arms or joining armed groups and gangs. These include violent state repression, the emergence of violent criminal and war economies, socioeconomic injustice, and increasing armed conflict, including in the wake of climate change.

Recommendations

The findings of this paper thus closely align with the key strategies outlined in the GENSAC Action Paper (2021),[85] in particular:

Strategy 2: Build the evidence base for results.
Strategy 4: Turn evidence into action at national and local levels.
Strategy 5: Link gender responsive small arms control to broader violence prevention efforts.

We have developed here a set of recommendations for national governments, donors, civil society, and academia.

National governments

- Address socioeconomic and political root causes of insecurity and violence, rather than criminalizing poverty and/or creating inescapable spirals of violence by adopting approaches that favor incarceration over rehabilitation. This can also include direct work with men and boys who might otherwise be drawn into armed or criminal violence, including the kind of social work approaches outlined in this paper, but also psychosocial trauma work with conflict-affected men of the kind that LPI has conducted in DR Congo. This work can also be linked to social protection approaches which have proven to be successful in reducing gender-based violence.[86]
- Approach small arms not only as a security or crime issue, but also as a socioeconomic, human rights, and public health issue.[87]
- For those countries with small arms production capacities, cease promoting and subsidizing small arms production, marketing, sales, and exports. These industries could and should be replaced by more future-oriented industries, such as those in the green economy.[88]
- Countries bearing the brunt of small arms violence may consider following the example of Mexico in pressing lawsuits against major small arms manufacturers.[89]
- Take the implementation of normative frameworks such as CEDAW, the WPS, or the ATT seriously, including addressing nonconflict armed violence and its gendered dimensions. While a handful of WPS National Action Plans have integrated action on small arms, the WPS Agenda has not fully engaged with arms control and disarmament. Much more could be done to break down policy and programming siloes.[90]
- Improve databases on small arms violence, including sex- and age-disaggregated data on suicides, accidents, femicides, homophobic and transphobic violence, and DV/IPV.
- Pass legislation and set up stringent controls to ensure that past perpetrators of various forms of DV/IPV, stalking, gendered hate crimes, and those showing signs of misogynist, homophobic, or transphobic radicalization are not able to obtain a gun license and have previous licences revoked. Laws could be linked to national commitments, for example CEDAW or the Istanbul Convention, or global and regional agendas such as the SDGs, WPS, or the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Model legislation developed in a participatory and inclusive manner—and which prioritizes potential gun violence victims' safety rather than gun owners' and producers' rights—could be a valuable way forward.
- Integrate gender perspectives into small arms control national action plans, in particular examining and addressing the links between masculinities and small arms.

- Further restrict the direct and indirect marketing and glorification of small arms, for example along the lines of restrictions on tobacco and alcohol products.
- Actively engage with and support civil society efforts that tackle the links between masculinities and small arms, and help institutionalize these by for example including them in school curricula.

Donor governments and implementing agencies

- Donors should support holistic approaches to working on masculinities and small arms, engaging men specifically as well as working with people of all genders to deconstruct, transform, and/or replace gender norms that link masculinities to small arms.
- Donors should also ensure there is no funding competition between this work and work with women in the field of small arms programming. As the experiences of work with and on men and masculinities in the field of GBV prevention has shown, there is a need to engage both women and men simultaneously for these efforts to be successful—and the work with men needs to be accountable to women. Competition could be avoided by creating separate funding pools, evaluation criteria, and budget lines for work on gender norms, including masculinities, and specific work to enhance women's participation in small arms control and larger violence reduction initiatives. Evaluation criteria used by donors to allocate funding should reflect this.[91]

Civil society

- Civil society organisations should continue their work on masculinities, gender, and small arms, but also reach across siloes. While civil society actors working on small arms have been doing groundbreaking work on integrating comprehensive and intersectional gender perspectives into small arms programming, those working on engaging with masculinities have been less active in tackling issues of small arms. More spaces for knowledge exchange and cross-silo cooperation should be promoted by civil society organizations.
- To increase their reach and sustainability, civil society organizations that work on masculinities, gender, and small arms should also actively seek to embed their work into broader violence reduction, peace-building, and development efforts.
- While awareness raising and gender-transformative workshops focused on young socioeconomically marginalized men are important, much more is needed to address these issues. These include working with other male demographics, addressing structural factors, and holding governments, the media, and arms manufacturers accountable.
- More advocacy that draws attention to the gendered dynamics of armed violence and explicitly links small arms control and masculinities is needed. Civil society organizations can pressure governments to enhance the evidence base by collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data, and to turn their international and national commitments into laws and effectively implement these.

Academia

- Academia, together with civil society and state agencies, can play a central role in collecting relevant data and developing tools for a robust evidence base on masculinities and small arms violence, including on the short-, medium- and long-term costs, drivers of gendered armed violence, and factors that contribute to it. This includes addressing both quantitative gaps (e.g., improving databases, and better disaggregation of data) as well as more in-depth and contextualized qualitative research on the interplay between masculinities and gender more broadly, with firearms in different settings. Qualitative research gaps include: examining "what works" when engaging with men of different backgrounds on uncoupling masculinities from firearms ownership; better understanding the gendered dynamics of the artisanal and industrial production of firearms and how these could be converted; understanding the gendered dynamics of firearms transfers; and examining the gendered impacts of firearms on the lives of particularly vulnerable groups, such as persons of diverse SOGIESC.

Endnotes

1 https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/mosaic/.

2 Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (2020). "Gender Responsive Small Arms Control in the Decade of Action for the SDGs. Accelerating Action for Global Violence Reduction."

3 The concept was developed by Kimblerlé Crenshaw "Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color", Stanford Law Review 43, 1241–1299 (1991).

4 The term 'masculinities' refers to the social roles men and boys enact, while 'men' and 'boys' refers to the biological persons. For an introduction to masculinities in the context of fragility and conflict, see for example: Engaging with men and masculinities in fragile and conflict-affected settings (Paris: OECD/DAC, 2019).

5 According to Small Arms Survey data, 96 percent of licensed gun owners in nine European countries are men. See: Dönges, Hannah and Aaron Karp. Women and Gun Ownership. Research Note No. 45 (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2014). Data from Southeastern Europe showed that men account for 97.2 percent of all legally owned firearms. See: Men and Firearms in South East Europe (Belgrade: UNDP SEESAC, 2019). In the Dominican Republic, 96.5 percent of all registered firearms were owned by men. See: Brea de Cabral, Mayra and Edylberto Cabral, 'Efectos del armamentismo en República Dominicana,' *Revista Psicologia Cientifica* 15 (2012), and 96 percent in Brazil. See: Lucas Marchesini, Homens são 96% dos donos de armas no Brasil, Metropoles (06 December, 2021). In the USA, the country with the largest number of civilian firearms, 57.8 percent are male. See: English, William, 2021 National Firearms Survey, Georgetown McDonough School of Business Research Paper No. 3887145. Reliable overall figures of firearms ownership are however difficult to come by, as databases on gun ownership are often not sex-disaggregated (using for example the household as a unit), and in many countries with high levels of unregistered weapons they are not reliable. Nonetheless, groups and individuals possessing illicit or unlicensed arms tend also globally to be mostly male, be it traditional hunting societies, cattle raiders, herders, gang members, insurgents, or violent extremists.

6 In Southeastern Europe, for example, men accounted for 91.2 percent of all security sector personnel authorized to carry firearms in 2016, compared to 8.8 percent of women (UNDP SEESAC, 2019).

7 For an overview, see for example LeBrun, Emile (ed.), Gender-responsive Small Arms Control - A Practical Guide. Geneva: Small Arms Survey; and *Sexed Pistols: The Gendered Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons*, edited by Farr, Vanessa, Henri Myrttinen, and Albrecht Schnabel, Tokyo and New York: United Nations University Press, 2009.

8 For example, of the 589,000 people who died due to armed violence in 2017, 84 percent (493,000) were men and boys and 16 percent (96,000) were women and girls. See: Hideg, Gergely and Anna Alvazzi del Frate, Darkening Horizons: Global Violent Deaths Scenarios, 2018–30. Briefing Paper. Geneva: Small Arms Survey (2019), p. 3).

9 For example, in Southeastern Europe in 2020, 92 percent of all women killed with firearms were killed in the context of domestic violence. See: Firearm Incidents in the Context of Domestic Violence, In Focus Brief 7, Belgrade: UNDP SEESAC (2021).

10 UNODC (2018). Global Study on Homicide 2018: Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls. Vienna: UNODC, pp. 30–37

11 See for example Myrttinen, Henri, Connecting the Dots: Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women Peace and Security Agenda. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (2020).

12 See for example Small Arms Survey. *Small Arms Survey 2014: Women and Guns*. Geneva: Small Arms Survey (2014).

13 There is by now also an extensive body of literature on military and militarized masculinities, see for example Duriesmith, David, *Masculinity and New War: The gendered dynamics of contemporary armed conflict*, London: Routledge, 2017; and Myrttinen, Henri, Khattab, Lana, and Naujoks, Jana, "Re-thinking hegemonic masculinities in conflict-affected contexts." *Critical Military Studies* 3, vol. 2, 2017: 103–119.

14 For a comprehensive overview of key global policy frameworks, see: GENSAC (2021) From Promises To Progress – Opportunities for action on gender responsive small arms control in existing international commitments, Issue Brief 1 and Pytlak, Allison, Converging Agendas: Global Norms on Gender, Small Arms, and Development in LeBrun (ed.) (2019).

15 SDG Target 16.4: "By 2030 significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime."

16 See for example Control Arms (2018), How to use the Arms Trade Treaty to address Gender-Based Violence - A Practical Guide for Risk Assessment.

17 This tends to be the case for particular 'iconic' weapons, such as the AK-47, AR-15, Desert Eagle or high-end hunting rifles which are also marketed with this link in mind.

18 Harcourt, Bernard E. *Language of the Gun – Youth, Crime, and Public Policy*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2014.

19 Farr et al. (2009), LeBrun (2019) and Myrttinen, Henri (2003). "Disarming Masculinities." *Disarmament Forum: Women, Men, Peace and Security* 4, 37–46. Geneva: UNIDIR.

20 Myrttinen, Henri. "Disarming Masculinities."

21 In the United States, for example, gun sales have risen sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/may/31/us-gun-sales-rise-pandemic.

22 Stroud, Angela. *Good Guys with Guns: The Appeal and Consequences of Concealed Carry*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

23 See for example ACLED (2021). Violence Targeting Women in Politics: Trends in Targets, Types, and Perpetrators of Political Violence.

24 See for example Alison, Miranda, "That's Equality for You, Dear": Gender, Small Arms and the Northern Ireland Conflict," in *Sexed Pistols;* and Baird, Adam, "Duros & Gangland Girlfriends: Male Identity, Gang Socialisation and Rape in Medellín," in *Violence at the Urban Margins in the Americas*, edited by Auyero, J., Bourgois, P., and Scheper-Hughes, N. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Theidon, Kimberly, "Reconstructing Masculinities: The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia." *Human Rights Quarterly* 31, 1–34.

25 Dagnino, "Citizenship."

26 Baird (2015).

27 Dudley and Bargent, "The Prison Dilemma: Latin America's Incubators of Organized Crime," cited in Schöb, Mia. 2021a. "Militarized Masculinities in Colombia and Approaches to Building Alternative Masculinities for a Feminist Peace." Publication for the Project "Confronting Militarized Masculinities" by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the MenEngage Alliance, p. 6.

28 Small Arms Survey (2013) To*o Close to Home – Guns* and Intimate Partner Violence. Geneva: Small Arms Survey United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) (2018). "Women, Men and the Gendered Nature of Small Arms and Light Weapons." New York: UNODA.

29 UNDP SEESAC (2018). Gender and SALW: Gender Aspects of SALW and How to Address Them in Practice, p. 10. In the US, "Around 4.5 million women in the United States have been threatened with a gun, and nearly 1 million women have been shot or shot at by an intimate partner. Over half of all intimate partner homicides are committed with guns. Indeed, a woman is five times more likely to be murdered when her abuser has access to a gun." Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, "Domestic Violence and Firearms," 2020.

30 M. Follman (2019). "Armed and Misogynistic: How Toxic Masculinity Fuels Mass Shootings," Mother Jones, May/June 2019 Issue. See also Quinn, Ben. "Glorification of Plymouth shooter by 'incels' prompts calls for action." *The Guardian*, January 3, 2022.

31 In the United States, which has the highest global rates of private gun ownership, over half of all suicide attempts involved firearms, and these attempts tended to be more lethal than other means. Around 85 percent of suicide attempts with a firearm ended in death in the US, while for example drug overdose, the most widely used method in suicide attempts, was fatal in less than 3 percent of cases. Suicide rates among men in the US are four times higher than among women. Drexler, Madeline. "Guns & Suicide – The Hidden Toll." Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Magazine, 2013. In Argentina, attention has been drawn in particular to a disproportionate implication of state-owned small arms in femicides and subsequent suicides perpetrated by security sector staff in private homes. To reduce the level of suicides and femicides, including those committed by policemen, Alejandra Otamendi recommends that "strategies should combine disarmament and gender perspectives, by reducing the access to guns and by questioning the hegemonic masculine identity that legitimizes and motivates guns' possession and gender violence." See: Otamendi, Maria Alejandra. "Suicidios, Femicidios-Suicidios y Armas de Fuego En Argentina. La Masculinidad Hegemónica En Debate." *Revista de Ciencias Sociales, DS-FCS* 33, no. 46 (2020): 107-30. In South Africa, men are 4-6 times more likely to commit suicide than women, and approximately 15 percent of suicides are committed with firearms. See: Seedat, Mohamed, Ashley Van Niekerk, Rachel Jewkes, Shahnaaz Suffla, and Kopano Ratele. "Violence and Injuries in South Africa: Prioritising an Agenda for Prevention." *The Lancet* 374, no. 9694 (2009): 1011–22.

32 See, for example, the work done by the Prevention Institute to reduce gun violence: https://www.preventioninstitute.org/focus-areas/preventing-violence-and-reducing-injury/preventing-violence-advocacy.

33 Small Arms Survey (2012). Small Arms Survey 2012: Moving Targets. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Widmer, Mireille, Surviving Armed Violence. Policy Paper No. 2. Geneva: Geneva Declaration, 2014.

34 Buchanan, Cate, ed. 2014. "Gun Violence, Disability and Recovery." Sydney: Surviving Gun Violence Project; and Widmer (2014)

35 Widmer (2014)

36 The *nasheed* that was the unofficial anthem of the so-called Islamic State, *Dawlat al-Islam Qamat*, for example includes samples of gunfire in the background.

37 A sub-genre of popular music originating from northern Mexico which glorifies the lives—and violence—of drug cartel members, now increasingly popular across Latin America.

38 See for example Robinson, Nick. "Militarism and opposition in the living room: the case of military videogames." *Critical Studies on Security* 4, no. 3; and Stahl, Roger. *Militainment, Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture*. London/New York: Routledge, 2010,.

39 In his chapter, "Dispatches from the Militainment Empire," Roger Stahl makes the case that the Pentagon has influenced close to 1000 films in the last two decades and made them more pro-military. See Stahl, R. "Dispatches from the Militainment Empire," in *Media Imperialism: Continuity and Change* (2019), 147.

40 A study of gun violence in top-selling movies found that acts of gun violence in movies authorized for children over 13 years of age nearly tripled between 1985 and 2015, whereas the rate has doubled in prime-time TV dramas between 2000 and 2018. See Bushman, Brad J., Patrick E. Jamieson, Ilana Weitz, and Daniel Romer. "Gun Violence Trends in Movies." *Pediatrics* 132, no. 6 (December 1, 2013): 1014–18.

41 https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-12-13-hollywoods-love-of-guns-increases-the-risk-of-shootings-both-on-and-off-the-set/.

42 Dreyfus, Pablo, et al. Small Arms in Rio de Janeiro: The Guns, the Buyback, and the Victims. Special Report. Geneva: Small Arms Survey, Viva Rio, and ISER, 2008.

43 Stroud (2016).

44 Harcourt (2006).

45 On how to do this in practice, see for example Corlazzoli, Vanessa, "A Matter of Practice: Gender-responsive Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Small Arms Programmes," in LeBrun (2019). UNODA is also finalizing a training manual on gender-mainstreaming small arms control, which provides concrete guidance to practitioners on how to develop policies, conduct small arms control operations, and link these to larger transformative approaches in a gender-responsive manner.

46 This section builds on information shared by forty-two key informants from civil society organizations, think tanks, academia, and governmental institutions originating or working in Latin America and the Caribbean, Western, East and South Africa, Southeast Asia, and South-eastern Europe. The authors are grateful to all key informants who contributed to this issue brief by sharing their experiences, illustrative materials, and references.

47 Part of the awareness-raising activities of the Silencing the Guns for the 2021 "16 Days of Activism against GBV" entailed first increasing the pressure on men in the East African context to fulfill social expectations as providers, and second, showing alternatives. Key informant interview with Joseph Dube, GENSAC Focal Point. October 2021.

48 Key informant interview with Emile LeBrun, Small Arms Survey. October 2021.

49 Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, Gender Responsive Small Arms Control in the Decade of Action for the SDGs. (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2021); LeBrun, Emile (ed.) Gender-responsive Small Arms Control - A Practical Guide. Geneva: Small Arms Survey (2019).

50 The project is run by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the MenEngage Alliance. Key informant interviews with Regina Ouattara, WILPF Burkina Faso, and Armelle Tsafack, WILPF Cameroon.

51 Interview with Javier Omar Ruiz, CHM, July 2021.

52 UNLIREC (2019), p. 145.

53 Ibid, pp. 140-141.

54 Ibid, p. 142.

55 Publication recommended during key informant interviews and material exchange with current and former ANMaC staff between November 2020-December 2021. See: Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos, Ministerio de Educacion, Registro Nacional de Armas y Explosivos, Inclusión Democrática en las Escuelas, and Sistema Argentino de Información Jurídica. "Propuestas Para El Desarme. Desarmando Mitos, Construyendo Argumentos." Buenos Aires, Argentina: Presidencia de la República, n.d. https://www.educ.ar/recursos/124666/propuestas-para-el-desarme-desarmando-mitos-construyendo-arg.

56 Key informant interviews and material exchange with current and former ANMaC staff between November 2020-December 2021.

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58 Key informant interview with Adèle Kirsten, Gun-Free South Africa. November 2021.

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62 Page, Ella "Men, Masculinity and Guns: Can We Break the Link?" IANSA Women's Network (2009).

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76 Schöb (2021b).

77 https://promundoglobal.org/programs/young-mens-clubs-against-violence/.

78 Interview with LPI, 24.01.2022.

79 https://gfsa.org.za/activism-and-education/.

80 Kirsten, Gun-Free South Africa.

81 See, for example, Colinas, Boris, Emilia Dungel, and Paul Holtom. "Gendered Firearms Regulations: Assessing the Risk of Gender-Based Violence during Firearm Licence Applications." *Geneva: Small Arms Survey* (blog), April 2, 2020. https://www.smallarms-survey.org/highlight/new-blog-post-gendered-firearms-regulations-assessing-risk-gender-based-violence-during; UNLIREC. "Estudio Normativo. La Necesaria Vinculación Entre Las Normas Sobre Violencia Por Motivos de Género y Las Normas de Regulación y Control de Armas Pequeñas. El Caso Específico de Perú." Lima, Peru: UNLIREC, 2017. http://unlirec.screativa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Violencia-Mujer.-Estudio-legal-Peru.pdf. pp. 14-15.

82 Such measures do not address the root causes of violence, and there are numerous loopholes: e.g., perpetrators being able to purchase weapons through other means, DV/IPV not being reported or not being taken seriously by the police, or the perpetrator not having to give up small arms which they had procured earlier.

83 J. Santaella-Tenorio, M. Cerdá, A. Villaveces and S. Galea. What Do We Know About the Association Between Firearm Legislation and Firearm-Related Injuries?, *Epidemiologic Reviews* 38, no. 1 (2016): 140–157.

84 Santos, Rita, Tatiana Moura and José Manuel Pureza. Violência e Armas de Fogo em Portugal. Coimbra: Edições Almedina (2016).

85 Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, Gender Responsive Small Arms Control in the Decade of Action for the SDGs. New York: Center on International Cooperation (2021).

86 https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/5-studies-showing-pathways-for-reductions-in-violence-against-children-and-violence-against-women/.

87 https://sur.conectas.org/en/small-arms-big-violations/.

88 For a trade union-led effort to transform the arms industry, see: https://www.facebook.com/LAATCanada/.

89 See also: https://www.preventioninstitute.org/focus-areas/preventing-violence-and-reducing-injury/preventing-violence-advocacy.

90 See for example Myrttinen, Henri. Connecting the Dots - Arms Control, Disarmament and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Geneva: UNIDIR (2020).

91 A good starting point for developing gender-responsive evaluation criteria are the widely used OECD-DAC and OSCE evaluation criteria. See for example: https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/GSToolkit_Tool-15%20EN%20FINAL_0.pdf.

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